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## **Governor Charlie Baker Testifies Before the Massachusetts Joint Committee on Transportation**

**BOSTON** – Today, Governor Charlie Baker joined Secretary of Transportation Stephanie Pollack and MBTA General Manager Steve Poftak to testify before the Massachusetts Joint Committee on Transportation in support of *An Act Authorizing and Accelerating Transportation Investment*, the administration's proposed legislation seeking \$18 billion in additional capital authorization to invest in building and modernizing a transportation system that meets the needs of residents, businesses and cities and towns statewide.

*Remarks as prepared for delivery:*

"Good afternoon Chair Boncore, Chair Straus, and members of the Committee – thank you for the opportunity to testify today about H. 4002, An Act Authorizing and Accelerating Transportation investment.

"I am joined today by MassDOT Secretary and CEO Stephanie Pollack, MBTA General Manager Steve Poftak, Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver and other members of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation and Executive Office for Administration and Finance. We thank you for your support of our shared goal of a safe, reliable, and sustainable transportation system.

"The \$18 billion transportation plan we filed will continue the evolution our transportation system is currently undergoing. Beyond containing resources enough to meet the anticipated needs of the next half decade (and beyond), this bill will:

- accelerate the initiatives already underway to modernize our transportation system
- invest half a billion dollars in our municipal partners as they develop the transportation systems necessary to meet their needs

- reduce the greenhouse gas impact and improve the resiliency of our transportation networks
- propose new tools to manage regional and local traffic congestion, and, perhaps most importantly,
- address barriers to innovation which will allow us to accelerate the delivery of these necessary projects.

“As we enter the second decade of MassDOT – the agency was formed November 2009 – we should consider what the Commonwealth has accomplished in its first decade.

- Finished the first Accelerated Bridge Program: including an award-winning renovation of the historic Longfellow Bridge, Worcester’s signature Burns Bridge (an American Public Works Association project of the year winner), the Braga and Fore River Bridges, and turned what would have been a “hellish three years” into a “hellish three weeks” by using accelerated techniques to finish the Commonwealth Avenue bridge in three weeks over two summers, instead of building it the traditional way and disrupting traffic for years.
- Completed the transition to All Electronic Tolling, becoming the first system in the nation to switch to an entirely cashless system, banishing the toll plazas that caused congestion and caused accidents.
- Developed and successfully launched the municipal small bridge program, providing crucial funding for locally owned bridges across the Commonwealth – 93 so far, further demonstrating our commitment to improving local infrastructure. When coupled with Complete Streets, these programs provide a suite of options for local communities to improve their transportation infrastructure in ways that make sense for them, while meeting state goals for asset condition and multi-modal transportation.
- MassDOT and the MBTA rescued the Green Line Extension project, turning a project that was \$1 billion over budget and falling further and further behind schedule into a reality, much the same way that the long-promised but never delivered South Coast Rail project is today under construction and will connect Fall River and New Bedford to Boston – and vice versa – by 2023.
- By 2023, the entire fleet of Orange and Red line cars will be new. Coupling an additional 80,000 seats on the Red and Orange Lines with a \$217M investment in new signals will allow for 30,000 extra passengers per hour during rush hour, with 3 minute instead of 4.5 minute headways.

“The MassDOT and MBTA capital plans reflect this acceleration as well. The FY17 five year capital plan called for a \$15.1 billion investment in MassDOT and MBTA infrastructure. The most recent five year plan, covering the years FY20-FY24, projects spending \$18.3 billion – significantly more.

“The MBTA is investing more in the system than ever before. The T went from failing to spend half of the money it had available for infrastructure upgrades, to achieving \$1 billion in capital spending in FY19. Their five year plans have gone from \$3.8 billion in the FY14-18 period, to \$8.2 billion planned for FY20-24.

“I think it’s important to stress here: this capital plan, and the massive growth in activity it entails, can be completely executed with the funding that is currently available. That includes all new vehicles for the entire Orange and Red line, track and signal rebuilds on every line, hundreds of new buses, thousands of new trips on the commuter rail, and thousands of new seats on the subway – all while launching new services for more riders across the system.

“MassDOT and the MBTA’s investment strategy is focused on delivering the benefits of a revitalized and resilient transportation system to residents across the Commonwealth, while also advancing projects that expand the reach of transit and target traffic bottlenecks. Both are making up for lost time on deferred maintenance, while investing in new capacity and dramatically improving system reliability.

“Our Commission report on the future of transportation and our congestion report are roadmaps, and our draft plans for the future of the MBTA and our commuter rail system lay out strategies to continue to enhance and expand our public transportation assets for the next 20 years.

“This \$18 billion transportation plan legislation lays the groundwork for a transportation system that will meet the future travel needs of our residents and support a strong, competitive economy.

“This administration is also committed to addressing the 40% of greenhouse gas emissions that come from the transportation sector. To that end, we are participating in the collaboration of 13 Northeast and Mid-Atlantic States, and the District of Columbia in the Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI). Like the RGGI program before it, TCI will create a lowering cap on Greenhouse Gas emissions. The legislation before you today earmarks up to half of the revenue generated by the sale of GHG allowances towards improving transit; investing in the transit system, which takes more drivers off the road and lowers emissions even further.

“I am proud to say that several business sector associations such as the Associated Industries of Massachusetts as well as the Environmental League of Massachusetts are joining together in support of this approach. It’s not every day these groups find common ground.

“The Congestion Report released earlier this summer looks both backward and forward. We did not need to spend months and months to conclude that yes, congestion is bad here, has been getting worse, and will likely get even worse as the greater Boston region continues to grow. But from those months of work have emerged targeted solutions that MassDOT is already beginning to implement, some reflected in this legislation.

“Modeling a new federal program and our own targeted success in places like the Middleborough Rotary, we are proposing a ‘local bottlenecks’ program targeted at municipally owned infrastructure that creates localized congestion that impacts one portion of a trip.

“We also found that Massachusetts lags behind similar sized and technology focused cities in the percentage of employees who telecommute. We have designed a targeted credit to encourage businesses to get more of their employees off the road for one or more days per week.

“The report also calls for moving forward with ‘managed lanes’ –which provide additional capacity and a faster trip – at a cost – which have been successful at increasing throughput and reducing congestion in other parts of the country.

“Other parts of this legislation will make it easier for MassDOT and the MBTA to work with private parties to partner on large projects, as well as expedite capital delivery, which would allow us to create lanes like these using techniques used in other states.

“Done right, these lanes give a quicker trip to the people paying for the lane, as well as other users in buses and in vanpools, and also for the drivers in the regular lanes who don’t have to deal with the traffic that moves into the managed lanes.

“This bond bill also contains the first ‘down payment’ on the future rail system being planned in the Rail Vision process. The future of the commuter rail will require more capacity. This bill supports the purchase of over 200 new MBTA bi-level coaches, in addition to the 80 the MBTA ordered last week bringing the total new seats coming to the commuter rail system to 18,000.

“And while the T is critical to keeping Eastern and Central Massachusetts moving, we have to continue to remember that the vast majority of travel in Massachusetts takes place on state and local roads. To that end, this bill contains \$10 billion for MassDOT highway construction projects, pavement, and bridge repairs.

“Building on the lessons learned during the previous Accelerated Bridge Program, we are proposing a Next Generation Bridge Financing Program, which will support \$1.25 billion in new bridge construction and enable new procurement techniques to bundle a number of smaller bridge projects together. As the old ABP phases out, this Next Generation program will replace it and help us reach our goals for bridge condition. If this program receives your support, the percentage of bridge deck in Poor Condition in Massachusetts will go from about 17% in 2014, down to 10% in 2026.

“Pavement condition will also benefit from the funding provided in this bill, helping MassDOT achieve over 60% of non-interstate, national highway system pavement in Good Condition by 2023.

“Finally, we continue to support cities and towns in preparing their roads and bridges for continued growth. This legislation contains another installment of \$200 million per year in Chapter 90 funds. Since taking office, we’ve awarded \$1.1 billion in chapter 90 funding to all 351 cities and towns, and that doesn’t include the supplemental funding we’ve included in 3 of the past 5 years.

“We’ve also supported municipal projects in more directed ways. Between the Small Bridge and Complete Streets projects we’ve put over \$75 million into local infrastructure, and this bill expands on our commitment to local roads through new programs which would award \$100 million to improve state numbered, but locally owned, roads and the \$50 million local bottleneck program I mentioned earlier.

“I know this is may be counterintuitive to argue at a bond bill hearing, but funding is actually the easiest of the critical paths we face. And all the funding in the world doesn’t matter if we can’t deliver projects. DOT Secretary Pollack and T General Manager Poftak will speak more about this, but I believe the suite of project delivery improvements laid out in this transportation plan is a critical component to ensuring MassDOT and MBTA can put the \$18 billion allocated this plan to use quickly.

“Innovative techniques like A+B bidding, which allows us to consider the value of time, as well as the cost of construction, when choosing a bid for a project, or cutting the bureaucratic red tape that slows down cost saving public-private partnerships and allows the T to take advantage of design, build, finance, operate and maintain procurement – techniques that are authorized and used in most states across this country – will allow MassDOT and the T to use the financial resources provided for in this legislation to their fullest, and provide new revenues beyond those included already in this bill.

“As I said when we filed this bill, if the Legislature enacts something that resembles this piece of legislation by the end of this session, Massachusetts will have the biggest arsenal of tools and capabilities it has ever had to make our transportation network safer, cleaner, and better able to service the needs and expectations of our residents and our communities.

“We have enviable problems. Our economy is growing, our population is growing, and the economic activity that dominates our Commonwealth is constrained by the limits of our current system. This legislation, along with our Housing Choice and TNC legislation, and the recommendations in our Congestion Report, will make it possible for us to create the transportation infrastructure we will need to continue to grow.

“The financing incorporated in this legislation is unprecedented and historic, and it will be applied in ways that strategically benefit the people, businesses, institutions and communities of this great state. It adds almost 100,000 seats to our public transportation system and will dramatically improve its reach and reliability. It doubles down on our highly effective large and small bridge initiatives. It fits with our efforts to enhance housing production, density and transit oriented development, and provides a path forward to fund additional transit initiatives in resiliency and strategic expansion.

“We look forward to working with our colleagues in the legislature and the community generally to get this \$18 billion plan for our transportation future enacted in this session.

“Thank you, and now Secretary Pollack and GM Poftak can give you more specifics on how this legislation will provide the MBTA and MassDOT the resources and long term planning they need to build the safe, reliable, and sustainable transportation system we all expect.”

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